A4950-3

SUPERMARKET TRENDS
1980 UPDATE

Prepared for
Food Marketing Institute

by

Yankelovich, Skelly and White, Inc.

Published by:

The Research Division
Food Marketing Institute
1750 K Street, NW
Washington, DC 20006

Price: $ 7.50 Members
$15.00 Non-Members

Copyrighted 1980 by:
Food Marketing Institute
Printed in U.S.A.

Foreword

The 1980 update of *Supermarket Trends* is the ninth report in a series of studies of the consumer climate in the United States. It is conducted annually for the Food Marketing Institute by Yankelovich, Skelly and White, Inc. The program, initiated in 1974, tracks and evaluates major trends in the marketplace affecting the supermarket industry, including

- the general consumer outlook
- attitudes toward the supermarket industry, including prices and profits
- consumer activism and consumer's views of supermarkets' responsibilities and recent performances
- methods of economizing and saving time
- buying habits and shopping behavior
- the fast food phenomenon.

The current study also updates several areas investigated for the first time in 1979

- the regional versus the smaller supermarket, from the consumer's point of view
- generic versus branded products
- computerized checkout systems.

In addition to these continuing concerns, the 1980 update of *Supermarket Trends* also probes two new issues of interest to the industry

- transportation to the supermarket
- coupon clipping.

Methodology

The present trend reading is based on a national telephone sample of 1,020 completed interviews conducted from central WATS line facilities from February 1, 1980 to February 6, 1980.

The sampling frame used covers the total area codes of the telephone system in the United States and within each area code the totality of residential telephone numbers. The actual sample is generated by a computer program which insures the randomization of the markets covered. A record is kept of what happens for each dialing, i.e., not a working number, no answer, no eligible respondent, etc. A single call is made to each number. The first question asked at each number screens for residential numbers only. Additional screening questions were then asked to insure that the final sample in the study was composed of 60 percent female heads of households and 40 percent male heads. To qualify for the sample, a consumer had to have shopped in the supermarket in the last two weeks. A total of 6,346 dialings were made in order to complete the final sample of interviews.

Total Dialings	**6,346**
Business numbers, no working number, language barrier	877
No answer, busy, etc.	2,298
No eligible respondent (including respondent not at home)	897
Refusals (including pre- and post-screen refusals)	1,254
Completed interviews	1,020
Men	409
Women	611

A 40 percent male sample was interviewed, instead of the 20 percent used in the past, to insure the reliability of both the male and the male principal shopper samples. However, to permit comparison with the previous *Trends* studies, the sample was weighted to the 80 percent female to 20 percent male ratio used in the past.

The results of this telephone survey are representative of households with telephones in the 48 states, but with disproportionate representation of women. Results for the total sample have a sampling tolerance of plus or minus three percent. In making comparisons between readings, differences are reliable at a plus or minus four percent level.

The Analysis and Report

In analyzing the data, traditional demographic and geographic variables were used. Special attention, however, was paid to the major constituencies who make up the total supermarket audience

- women—including both those who work and those who do not
- men—including those who are principal shoppers.

Profile of the Key Groups

		Female Shoppers			Male Shoppers	
	Total	Total	Working	Non-working	Total	Principal Shoppers[1]
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Age						
Under 35 years	40	38	49	30	49	43
35-49 years	24	25	28	23	20	22
50 years and over	36	37	23	47	31	35
Incomes[2]						
Under $10,000	19	20	11	26	21	30
$10,000-19,999	40	40	39	42	36	37
$20,000 and over	41	40	50	32	43	33
Education						
Less than high school graduate	23	23	16	28	22	25
High school graduate	39	41	38	44	31	26
Some college	20	18	20	17	27	29
College graduate/postgraduate	18	18	26	11	20	20
Marital Status						
Married	70	71	70	74	63	48
Widowed/divorced/separated	16	18	18	17	9	15
Single (never married)	14	11	12	9	28	37

[1]Principal shoppers are those who are the main food shoppers for the household. Fifty-one percent of all male shoppers consider themselves as the principal food shopper; compared to 92 percent for non-working women and 93 percent for working women.
[2]Based on those answering.

In general, the working women tend to be

younger
wealthier
better educated
married.

The nonworking women tend to be

older
less affluent
less educated
married.

The princpal male shoppers tend to be

less affluent
single.

This report includes an overview and summary of the detailed findings of the study as well as the most significant statisticai tables.

Summary

For the convenience of the user, the following table summarizes the issues and changes in the key *Trends* indicators which have occurred since the 1974 baseline study.

Key Trends Indicators[1]

	Baseline 1974	Winter 1974	Winter 1975	Spring 1977	Spring 1978	Winter 1979	Winter 1980
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Business strikes a fair balance between profits and public responsibility	28	18	21	18	20	18	16
Supermarkets strike a fair balance between profits and public responsibility	42	28	32	39	34	36	35
Cost of food a major personal concern	64	76	55	54	43	58	57
Supermarkets seen as benefiting from high prices	59	61	57	59	68	60	56
Expect food prices to rise sharply	35	—	21	33	22	38	29
Buying less meat	48	58	59	—	43	52	61
Buying smaller sizes/only buy what needed	46	64	65	—	60	68	69
Buying fewer convenience foods	55	64	65	—	58	58	66
Stocking up when finding a good bargain	55	67	71	—	70	73	77
Outrageous Food Price Index[2]	28.2	27.1	21.0	20.1	15.2	16.8	14.5

[1]Trend readings are shown for seven of the nine *Trends* readings. To avoid seasonal variations, however, figures are not shown for the two summer readings in 1975 and 1976.
[2]A composite measure covering a variety of food items excluding sugar and hamburger.

Table of Contents

Page

FOREWORD iii

OVERVEW AND HIGHLIGHTS OF THE FINDINGS 3

MAJOR FINDINGS

Section I—The General Outlook 7

Section II—Gasoline and the Price of Food 11

Section III—Methods of Economizing and Saving Time 17

Section IV—Consumer Activism 23

Section V—Consumers Look at the Supermarket 27

Section VI—Supermarket Services 33

Section VII—Supermarket Shopping Patterns 35

Section VIII—The Fast Food Phenomenon 39

Overview and Highlights of the Findings

The supermarket industry today is operating in a difficult environment with consumer confidence at an all-time low. The big villain in the consumer's mind and the major focus of their wrath is gasoline. At least for the time being, outrage at gasoline prices has taken the heat off of rising food prices, but there are signs that this situation could change and that the marketplace needs reconfirmation that the industry is doing the best possible job of providing the increasingly price-sensitive consumer with the best value for the dollar.

Of all the tools available, coupons at this time appear to be doing the most to reinforce supermarket-customer relationships. But consumers are likely to demand more than that as they try to balance their budgets and struggle with the mounting pressures of inflation, energy shortages and time constraints. This is the single most important finding for the nation's supermarket operators in the 1980 reading of *Supermarket Trends*.

As in the past, *Trends* this year contains both positive and negative findings for the supermarket industry. On the positive side

- Despite the general consumer environment, the image of the supermarket industry has not deteriorated in the past year. Although consumers will say supermarkets are making a lot of money, they are less likely than in the past to say supermarket profits have increased.
- Consumers do not worry as much about food prices as they do about gasoline or utility prices, and they do not expect food prices to rise as sharply as gasoline and utility prices in the future. Although a majority of consumers are still worried about the cost of food (57 percent), the Outrageous Food Price Index this year has reached a six-year low of 14.5, chiefly due to declining concern about meat prices.
- For all their concern about inflation, consumers do not appear to be economizing more at the supermarket than in the past, but rather they are continuing what they have done up until now—stocking up on bargains (77 percent), buying store or lower-priced brands (73 percent), and buying fewer luxury items or snacks (72 percent). The most significant change this year is the greater use of price-off coupons (70 percent this year, 61 percent last year).
- In spite of inflation and high gasoline prices, there are no signs that consumers are cutting back on the frequency with which they go to the supermarket.
- Consumers say they're eating at fast food restaurants less frequently than in the past. Though the figures suggest that this is not the case, this perception may foreshadow a real decline in the fast food restaurant market.

On the negative side

- The national mood has reached a new *Trends* low. Only one in four (24 percent) consumers feel good about the current state of the nation, more than one in three (37 percent) say their standard of living has declined in the past year, and a similar number (36 percent) are pessimistic about the future as well.
- Consumers clearly are angered by inflation. As was the case in 1974 and 1977, a majority already have or are ready to refuse to buy products that cost too much (86 percent) or write letters to their congressmen (65 percent). About one in three consumers say they are willing to boycott particular products (36 percent) or stores (31 percent) or distribute literature to keep people from buying things (31 percent). More than half the consumers can now be classified as activists (eight percent) or potential activists (44 percent).
- Although the supermarket industry continues to receive more favorable ratings than oil companies, utilities and business in general, more than half still say supermarkets are benefiting from high prices (56 percent) and strike a bad balance between profits and public responsibilities (64 percent).

Supermarket Trends this year continues to monitor several other issues of interest to the supermarket industry

- Many consumers continue to look for ways to save time while shopping. A majority (53 percent) say they go to the supermarket at a less crowded time of day, but comparatively few go to a particular supermarket because it's less crowded (26 percent). Other popular time-saving measures include taking what meat is available rather than asking for a different cut (42 percent) and buying

larger quantities (39 percent). Men and working women are most likely to look for ways to save time at the supermarket.

Support has grown minimally for the regional supermarket idea, particularly in the West. Consumers would now prefer larger, regional supermarkets further away from home (47 percent) to smaller, less complete ones closer to home (42 percent).

Awareness of computerized checkout systems has increased, but consumers are still divided over whether they benefit or hurt them.

Awareness of generic products has slightly increased (66 percent this year, 61 percent last year), though interest in them remains unchanged.

The essential finding of *Supermarket Trends, 1980,* is that more than ever consumers are looking *primarily* to get their money's worth. Value for the dollar remains the single most important feature a supermarket can offer. Consumers say it is both the most outstanding characteristic of their favorite supermarket and the area in which supermarket performance has most deteriorated over the past year. Although their attention has been diverted by gasoline prices, they have not lost sight of rising food costs and will judge supermarkets on the basis of future price increases.

As to the future, consumers are worried. Over one out of three (36 percent) have no real confidence that their standard of living will improve compared to 17 percent who have a lot of confidence. One in three (29 percent) expect food prices to rise sharply in the next six months which is a decline from the 38 percent who anticipated a sharp rise in 1979. Shoppers will be paying particular attention to meat, where they most fear price increases, but they will also be watching coffee, where almost one in two (45 percent) anticipate the same or cheaper prices.

The following is a summary of the findings of the study:

1. **Continued Decline in Consumer Confidence**

   The national mood has reached its lowest level since the initial baseline reading of *Supermarket Trends* in 1974. Only one in four (24 percent) consumers feels good about the current state of the nation and a growing proportion (37 percent) are pessimistic about the future as well. This pessimistic view is widespread, cutting across all parts of the nation and all demographic groups, though it is particularly widespread among those who have been hit hardest by inflation

   the elderly

   the lower income group

   nonwhites

   residents of the Northeast

   the less educated.

2. **Rising Energy Costs, Not Food Costs, Are the Chief Focus of Concern**

   One somewhat favorable note to the otherwise dismal picture of consumer confidence is that it is energy and not food that is the primary focus of consumer concern. Just under six out of ten (57 percent) consumers are worried a lot about food prices, compared to nearly eight out of 10 (78 percent) who are worried about the cost of gasoline and six out of 10 (60 percent) who are worried about utility costs. For the time being, at least, energy costs appear to be taking the heat off the supermarket industry. The Outrageous Food Price Index has reached a six-year low of 14.5, and consumers expect food prices to rise less sharply than gas or utility costs.

3. **Consumer Activism and Potential Activism are Up**

   As a result of rising inflation, consumer activism or potential activism is once again on the rise. The majority (52 percent) of consumers can be counted among the activists (eight percent) or potential activists (44 percent). Consumers appear to be more ready to engage in all types of collective activism, including

   writing to congressmen

   getting neighbors to sign petitions

   joining organized boycotts

   distributing leaflets

   marching on picket lines.

4. **Image and Performance of the Supermarket Industry**

   The image of the supermarket industry has remained relatively steady, despite the rising concern about inflation. The majority (56 percent) of consumers continue to believe that supermarkets are benefiting from higher food prices. However, over the past two years they have become somewhat less likely to believe that profit levels are higher than they used to be (53 percent believed they were higher in 1978 versus 42 percent in 1980). Particularly important for the supermarket industry is the fact that consumers continue to blame the government and a variety of other institutions for high food prices; few (two percent) blame supermarkets.

5. **The Performance of Supermarkets**

   The primary demand consumers place on supermarkets is to provide an attractive and pleasurable place to shop with fresh products and good specials. A substantial majority of consumers continue to believe that their own supermarket does a good job of fulfilling these responsibilities.

Despite this generally favorable performance, there is one danger sign. Consumers regard value for the dollar as the most outstanding characteristic of their own supermarket, yet at the same time, they feel value for the dollar has declined in the past year. Clearly, improving the perceived performance of supermarkets in terms of value for the dollar must be a key goal for the industry.

6. **Shopping Patterns**

Supermarket shopping patterns have undergone no dramatic changes in the past year. Frequency of shopping has remained relatively constant, with half (54 percent) of all consumers going once a week and half going (46 percent) more than once a week. Thursday through Saturday continues to be the principal shopping days for most consumers.

7. **Saving Time**

Consumers continue to engage in a wide variety of shopping practices to save time, chief among these is going to a supermarket at a particular time of day because it is less crowded than at other times. Working women are somewhat more likely than nonworking women to do a variety of things to save time while shopping, including

taking meat that is available

going to a convenience store

skipping things on the shopping list.

8. **Regional Supermarkets**

Though they continue to be divided on the issue, consumers appear to be moving toward increasing acceptance of larger regional supermarkets with a greater variety of goods over smaller ones which are closer to home. The regional supermarket concept is particularly well received in the West where one out of two (50 percent) favor it compared to one in three (35 percent) who favor smaller supermarkets that are closer to home.

9. **Computerized Checkout**

The majority (52 percent) of consumers are now familiar with computerized checkout systems. However, there has been little growth in the acceptance of their benefits, though men, college graduates and the more affluent are somewhat more likely to feel they benefit consumers.

10. **Generics**

The past year has also seen a slight increase in the proportion of consumers who are familiar with generic products—two out of three (66 percent) consumers now say they have heard of supermarkets that offer cheaper items without brand identification. Despite this growth in familiarity, there has been no real growth of interest in generics, one in four (24 percent) continue to describe themselves as very interested in such products.

11. **Fast Food**

Although the proportion of consumers who go to fast food restaurants has remained fairly steady over the past two years, those who do go to fast food restaurants appear to be going somewhat more frequently. Still, consumers describe themselves as going less often now. This perception of their own habits may forecast a suggesting trend toward declining fast food consumption in the years ahead.

Major Findings

Section I
The General Outlook

The national mood at the start of the 1980's is one of pessimism and uncertainty. This year, *Supermarket Trends* posts the lowest readings in its six-year history for consumer assessment of the state of the nation and confidence in the future.

Only one in four shoppers (24 percent) now says things are going very or fairly well in the country down dramatically from the over 50 percent readings *Supermarket Trends* obtained on this question in 1977 and 1978. Almost two in five (37 percent) say their standard of living is worse than it was a year ago, up 15 percent from the 1978 reading. And more than one in three (36 percent) now say they have no confidence that their standard of living will improve.

This bleak mood is shared by all demographic groups, but the heaviest burden is being felt by

the elderly

nonwhites

persons in the Northeast.

Continuing Pessimism in the National Mood

The national mood continues to become more pessimistic, with only one in four consumers (24 percent) now believing that things are going very or fairly well in the country. Although the decline from February, 1979 to March, 1980 is not as great as the 19 percent drop measured from March, 1978 to February, 1979, it still represents a hefty 13 percent drop and the lowest reading on national mood since the start of *Supermarket Trends*.

The pessimism pervades all demographic groups, with men, the affluent, and the college educated somewhat more likely to be optimistic than the country as a whole.

Trend in the National Mood

	Apr 1977	Mar 1978	Feb 1979	Feb 1980
	%	%	%	%
How Things Ae Going in the Country				
Very/fairly well	54	56	37	24
Pretty/very badly	46	44	63	76

The National Mood

	Total
	%
Total	**24**
Things in the Country Are Going Very/Fairly Well	
Male shoppers	**31**
Principal shoppers	27
Female shoppers	**23**
Working	22
Nonworking	25
Income	
Under $10,000	22
$10,000-19,999	20
$20,000 and over	31
Region	
Northeast	22
North Central	21
South	26
West	30
Education	
College graduate/postgraduate	31
Noncollege graduate	24

Consumers See Further Declines in Their Standards of Living

Self-perceived standards of living continue to decline this year, with 37 percent of the public saying their standard of living is now worse than it was a year ago, and only 19 percent saying it is better. The change in people's assessment of their standard of living is most marked by contrasting 1980 with 1978.

Trend in the Standard of Living Compared to a Year Ago

	Apr 1977	Mar 1978	Feb 1979	Feb 1980
	%	%	%	%
Better	22	28	22	19
Same	46	50	43	44
Worse	32	22	35	37

Inflation's Effect on Certain Key Consumer Groups

Inflation continues to affect some groups more than others. The groups who say their standard of living has declined most in the past year are the

male principal shoppers

nonworking women

elderly

low income

nonwhite

northeastern residents

noncollege graduate.

However, other groups, who had previously been coping well with inflation, are now showing signs that they, too, are being affected. These include

working women

the young and middle aged

western residents.

Although nonworking women continue to feel their standard of living has declined much more than do working women, both groups say they have a lower standard of living than they had last year.

Standard of Living Compared to a Year Ago

	Better	Worse	Net Difference (Better-Worse)
	%	%	%
Total	**19**	**37**	**−18**
Male shoppers	**23**	**39**	**−16**
Principal shoppers	20	45	−25
Female shoppers	**18**	**36**	**−18**
Working	23	31	− 8
Nonworking	14	40	−26
Age[1]			
Under 35 years	31	28	+ 3
35-49 years	18	42	−24
50 years and over	6	40	−34
Income			
Under $10,000	12	53	−41
$10,000-19,999	17	39	−22
$20,000 and over	26	25	+ 1
Nonwhite	**20**	**50**	**−30**
Region			
Northeast	15	43	−28
North Central	18	34	−16
South	23	36	−13
West	18	33	−15
Education			
College graduate/ postgraduate	25	23	+ 2
Noncollege graduate	18	40	−22

[1]Female shoppers only.

Confidence in the Future Is Lower Than Ever

Fewer shoppers this year say they are confident that their standard of living will improve in a few years. More than one in three (36 percent) now say their standard of living will not improve, up from the one in five (22 percent) reading obtained in 1977.

The young and the college educated are least likely to be pesimistic; the elderly are especially worried about their futures. These groups' confidence in the future, or lack thereof, contributes to and reinforces their assessments of the national mood.

Trends in the Confidence that Standard of Living Will Improve

	Apr 1977	Mar 1978	Feb 1979	Feb 1980
	%	%	%	%
Lot of confidence	27	26	22	17
Some confidence	49	43	45	46
No real confidence	22	30	32	36
Not sure	2	1	1	1

Confidence that Standard of Living Will Improve

	Lot/Some Confidence
	%
Total	**63**
Male Shoppers	**67**
Principal shoppers	66
Female shoppers	**63**
Working	65
Nonworking	60
Age[1]	
Under 35 years	72
35-49 years	62
50 years and over	52
Education	
College graduate/postgraduate	76
Noncollege graduate	61

[1]Female shoppers only.

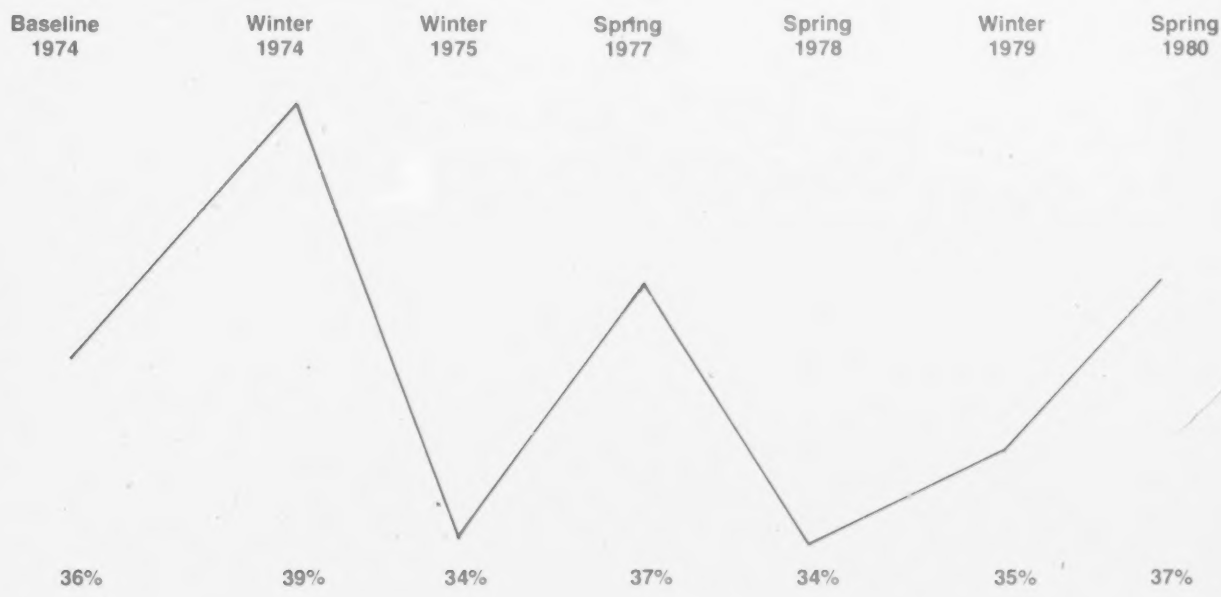
The Money Squeeze Indicator

Despite the worsening national mood, declining standards of living and lower levels of confidence in the future, the proportion of consumers in deep financial distress is virtually unchanged from its previous levels. The Food Marketing Institute's Money Squeeze Indicator[1] this year measures 37%, indicating that it is still the bottom third of the country who face the most serious financial troubles.

[1]Consumers feeling the money squeeze are defined to be those who worry more about money than other problems and worry a lot or a little about not being able to keep up with the bills.

The Food Marketing Institute's Money Squeeze Indicator

Money Squeeze Victims



Section II
Gasoline and the Price of Food

Compared to the skyrocketing price of gasoline, food is seen as a relative bargain. While more than half the shoppers (57 percent) say they are worried a lot about the cost of food, there are several signs that concern over rising food prices has leveled off

- The Outrageous Food Price Index, a composite measure of several food items, stands this year at 14.5, its lowest level in the six-year history of *Supermarket Trends*.
- Approximately three in 10 (29 percent) expect the price of food to rise sharply in the next six months. This figure is about average since this reading began in 1975.
- Meat and hamburger, which were considered to have particularly outrageous prices last year, are now considered more reasonable.
- Gasoline is a much greater cause for concern than ever before, with 78 percent worrying a lot about its high prices, 62 percent considering it outrageously priced, and 68 percent expecting to see another sharp increase in its price in the next six months.

Men are less likely to consider food prices outrageously high than are women; they are also less likely to expect sharp price rises for food items. Working women tend to feel food prices are more reasonable than do nonworking women.

Gasoline Is the Prime Consumer Concern, Not Food

Although food prices have risen in the past year, the number of consumers worried a lot about the cost of food has remained steady (57 percent). Perhaps their attention, and concern, has been diverted by the spectacular rise in the price of gasoline during the past year. Fully three in four (78 percent) are worried a lot about the price of gasoline.

The affluent, the college educated, the men, especially those who are principal shoppers, and those with smaller households, are less worried about the cost of food than the other groups, while the nonwhites are more worried. But all these groups are much more worried about the price of gasoline than they are about the price of food.

Trends in Consumer Concerns

	Nov 1974	Nov 1975	Apr 1977	Mar 1978	Feb 1979	Feb 1980
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Worried a Lot About:						
The cost of gasoline	a	a	a	a	a	78
The current international situation	a	a	a	a	a	69
The cost of utilities	a	56	64	57	57	60
The cost of food	76	55	54	43	58	57
Saving for the future	48	39	41	39	39	47
Being robbed/mugged	35	32	29	31	29	36
Keeping up with bills	33	25	31	28	29	32
Paying mortgage/rent	26	20	23	20	21	23
Losing my job	18	17	17	15	15	16
Dealing with honest storekeepers	21	13	14	15	14	16

[a]Not asked.

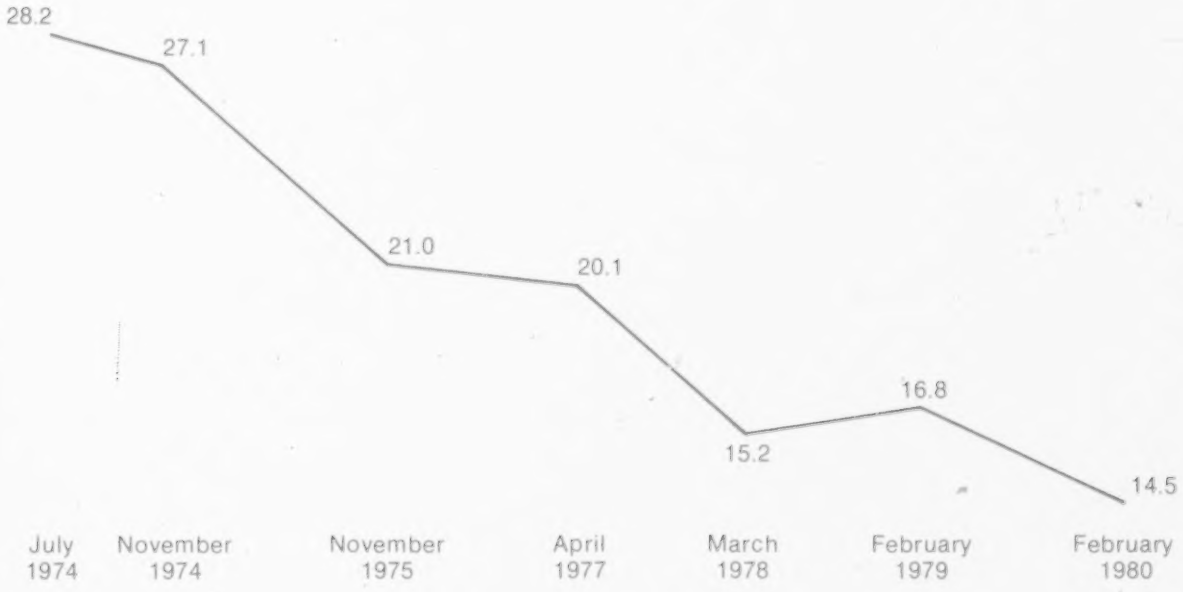
Consumer Concerns

	Worried a Lot About:	
	Cost of Food	Cost of Gasoline
	%	%
Total	**57**	**78**
Male Shoppers	**49**	**76**
Principal shoppers	47	76
Female shoppers	**59**	**78**
Working	54	82
Nonworking	62	75
Income		
Under $10,000	59	68
$10,000-19,999	61	82
$20,000 and over	50	80
Nonwhite	**72**	**81**
Number in Household		
One	49	68
Two	53	76
Three	66	85
Four or more	63	85
Region		
Northeast	55	65
North Central	56	83
South	58	83
West	57	76
Education		
College graduate/postgraduate	43	79
Noncollege graduate	60	77

The Outrageous Food Price Index Is at Its Lowest Level Ever

The Outrageous Food Price Index this year measures 14.5, its lowest reading ever in the history of *Supermarket Trends*. Last year the price of many key food items, particularly meat and hamburger, was considered unjustifiably high; this year, both are seen as much less outrageously priced.

Outrageous Food Price Index[1]



[1]A composite index based on shoppers who indicate they were outraged by the price of 11 food items.

Items With Outrageous Prices

	Nov 1974	Nov 1975	Apr 1977	Mar 1978	Feb 1979	Feb 1980
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Gasoline	25	31	21	20	31	62
Hamburger	[a]	[a]	[a]	[a]	47	38
Drugs and pharmaceuticals	39	41	35	43	37	38
Meat	37	39	20	18	42	29
Paper goods	36	30	20	26	24	25
Coffee	33	37	85	56	25	24
Milk	33	25	14	12	22	21
Bread	34	23	15	13	16	21
Frozen juices	15	11	14	23	17	16
Sugar	93	25	14	11	15	15
Other fruits and vegetables	27	19	21	13	17	11
Canned fruits and vegetables	27	14	11	6	10	11
Eggs	20	15	17	8	14	8
Potatoes	20	16	9	5	8	7
Rice and beans	37	17	9	7	6	7
Onions	15	15	12	6	8	5
Outrageous Food Price Index[1]	27.1	21.0	20.1	15.2	16.8	14.5

[a]Not asked.
[1]Does not include hamburger, sugar and nonfood items.

Food Price Hikes Are Expected To Be Moderate

Three in ten (29 percent) expect the price of food to rise sharply in the next six months, but this is modest compared both to last year's 38 percent and to the ever-increasing numbers who expect sharp price rises in utility rates and, especially, gasoline. Fully 68 percent expect another sharp rise in the price of that commodity in the next six months, compared to only one in four (23 percent) who anticipate a sharp rise in meat prices and the even lower numbers who expect sharp rises in the price of fresh fruits (15 percent), fresh vegetables (15 percent) and coffee (12 percent) in the next six months.

Anticipated Changes in Prices

	Nov 1975	Apr 1977	Mar 1978	Feb 1979	Feb 1980
	%	%	%	%	%
Expect Prices to Rise Sharply in Next Six Months					
Gasoline	34	42	27	59	68
Gas and electric rates	38	43	35	48	54
Automobiles	22	25	29	33	31
Food	21	33	22	38	29
Clothing	15	15	12	17	18

Men and Working Women Are Less Pessimistic About Rising Food Prices

For most food items, men are less likely to say they are outraegously priced than are women. In particular, fewer men than women say the prices of the following are outrageous

hamburger

bread

milk

frozen juices

fruits and vegetables.

Of the women, those who work tend to feel food prices are less outrageous than those who don't. Working women are less likely than nonworking women to say the following are outrageously priced

meat

coffee

milk

bread

hamburger.

The men are also more optimistic about the future than the women. Both groups expect the price of meat to rise more sharply in the near future than the price of fresh fruits, fresh vegetables and coffee, but while one in four women (25 percent) think the cost of meat will rise sharply in the next six months, only one in five men (19 percent) anticipate that this will be the case.

Anticipated Changes in Food Prices in Next Six Months[1]

	Meat	Fresh Fruits	Fresh Vegetables	Coffee
	%	%	%	%
Same/cheaper	20	32	34	45
Little more expensive	56	51	50	40
Rise sharply	23	15	15	12

[1]Unsures not shown.

Items With Outrageous Prices

	Total	Women			Male Shoppers
		Total	Working	Non-working	
	%	%	%	%	%
Gasoline	62	62	59	64	59
Hamburger	38	41	36	45	28
Drugs and pharmaceuticals	38	39	31	45	33
Meat	29	31	21	38	23
Paper goods	25	27	23	31	14
Coffee	24	26	19	30	19
Milk	21	23	16	27	13
Bread	21	23	17	28	12
Frozen juices	16	18	15	21	9
Sugar	15	17	15	17	10
Canned fruits and vegetables	11	13	11	14	5
Other fruits and vegetables	11	13	14	12	5
Eggs	8	9	6	11	4
Potatoes	7	8	5	10	3
Rice and beans	7	8	7	9	3
Onions	5	5	5	5	3
Outrageous Food Price Index[1]	14.5	16.1	12.4	18.6	9.9

[1]Does not include hamburger, sugar and nonfood items.

Anticipated Change in Food Prices

	Total	Female Shoppers	Male Shoppers
	%	%	%
Expect Prices to Rise Sharply in Next Six Months			
Meat	23	25	19
Fresh fruits	15	16	11
Fresh vegetables	15	16	12
Coffee	12	14	5

Section III
Methods of Economizing and Saving Time

The most significant economy measure this year is the increased use of price-off coupons. Seven in 10 consumers (70 percent) say they are making more use of them.

Several other economy measures have become entrenched in consumers' daily shopping and meal preparation habits. These include

stocking up on bargains

buying store/lower-priced brands.

As was the case in 1974 and 1975, consumers this year are again cutting back on the luxuries. More say they are now

buying fewer snack and convenience foods

buying less meat and cheaper cuts of meat

eating out and entertaining less often.

Women are still more likely to economize, especially in using coupons, stocking up and planning meals in advance, but working women, who last year were economizing less than nonworking women, now appear to be economizing about as much.

Consumers also continue to look for ways to save time while shopping. Most say they like to shop at a supermarket at a time when it's uncrowded, but comparatively few are willing to switch to a less crowded supermarket.

In general, men say they save time by going to convenience stores and less crowded supermarkets; women say they save time while at the supermarket by skipping things on their shopping list and buying larger quantities. Working women continue to be more likely than nonworking women to look for ways to save time while shopping.

Economizing by Consumers in the Stores and at Home Is Becoming More Widespread

The generally stable or only slightly higher readings given to most methods of economizing this year indicate that these tactics have, for many, become entrenched parts of their daily life-styles. There is some indication that, as was the case in 1974 and 1975, consumers are cutting back more on the luxuries than other things; more consumers this year say they are

buying fewer luxury items/snacks

buying less convenience foods

buying less meat

buying cheaper cuts of meat

eating out less often

cutting down on entertainment.

The development of greatest significance this year is the increased use of price-off coupons. Seven in 10 (70 percent) say they are making more use of them, and six in 10 (60 percent) say they always or often clip them. Coupons are clearly more important to consumers than specials, since only three in 10 (30 percent) say they will go to a supermarket not usually shopped at for advertised specials.

Trends in Methods of Economizing While Shopping[1]

	Nov 1974	Nov 1975	Mar 1978	Feb 1979	Feb 1980
	%	%	%	%	%
Doing Now to Economize					
Stock up when find a bargain	67	71	70	73	77
Buy store/lower-priced brands	77	72	70	70	73
Buy fewer luxury items/snacks	75	72	67	64	72
Make more use of price-off coupons	66	65	65	61	70
Buy just amount needed/smaller sizes	64	65	60	65	69
Use shopping list	63	64	63	63	67
Buy less convenience foods	64	65	58	58	66
Buy specials even if hadn't planned to	a	a	63	62	65
Buy fewer national brands	a	a	a	57	63
Buy less meat	58	59	43	52	61
Clip coupons almost always/pretty often	64	58	57	54	60
Buy cheaper cuts of meat	59	55	47	53	60
Buy in quantity if cheaper	55	55	54	55	59
Stock up on items that may cost more later	a	42	44	44	49
Go to supermarket not usually shopped at for advertised specials	a	28	23	29	30
Put items back at end	14	12	7	13	13

[a]Not asked.
[1]Question not asked in April, 1977.

Cost Saving Trends in Meal Preparation and Eating[1]

	Nov 1974	Nov 1975	Mar 1978	Feb 1979	Feb 1980
	%	%	%	%	%
Doing Now to Economize					
Do more with leftovers	75	72	74	76	77
Do more meal planning	63	64	65	61	68
Eat out less often	a	a	a	49	59
Do more baking/canning/freezing	48	52	51	49	54
Cut down on entertainment	42	44	39	41	51
Serve less at meals	26	24	20	25	30

[a]Not asked.
[1]Question not asked in April, 1977.

Women Are More Likely To Be Economizing Than Men

Women appear more likely than men to be economizing in a number of ways, including

clipping and using price-off coupons

stocking up when they find a bargain

stocking up on items that may cost more later

using a shopping list

doing more meal planning.

Women and men are about equally likely to employ most of the other economy measures.

Methods of Economizing While Shopping

	Total	Female Shoppers	Male Shoppers
	%	%	%
Doing Now to Economize			
Stock up when find a bargain	77	79	71
Buy store/lower-priced brands	73	74	69
Buy fewer luxury items/ snacks	72	72	72
Make more use of price-off coupons	70	73	59
Buy just amount needed/smaller sizes	69	70	67
Use shopping list	67	69	57
Buy less convenience foods	66	66	66
Buy specials even if hadn't planned to	65	67	60
Buy fewer national brands	63	63	60
Buy less meat	61	63	56
Clip coupons almost always/pretty often	60	63	48
Buy cheaper cuts of meat	60	61	56
Buy in quantity if cheaper	59	59	56
Stock up on items that may cost more later	49	50	42
Go to supermarket not usually shopped at for advertised specials	30	30	28
Put items back at end	13	14	11

Methods of Economizing in Meal Preparation and Eating

	Total	Female Shoppers	Male Shoppers
	%	%	%
Doing Now to Economize			
Do more with leftovers	77	78	74
Do more meal planning	68	70	61
Eat out less often	59	59	58
Do more baking/ canning/freezing	54	56	46
Cut down on entertainment	51	50	53
Serve less at meals	30	30	28

Working Women Are Economizing as Much as Nonworking Women

In the past, women who worked were less likely than nonworking women to use a variety of economy measures at the supermarket and in the kitchen. This year, both groups say they are equally likely to economize, although more nonworking women still

do more meal planning

do more baking, canning and freezing

clip coupons almost always or pretty often.

How Women Economize While Shopping

	Female Shoppers		
	Total	Working	Non-working
	%	%	%
Doing Now to Economize			
Stock up when find a bargain	79	78	79
Buy store/lower-priced brands	74	77	72
Make more use of price-off coupons	73	70	75
Buy fewer luxury items/ snacks	72	76	70
Buy just amount needed/ smaller sizes	70	69	70
Use shopping list	69	69	70
Buy specials even if hadn't planned to	67	68	66
Buy less convenience foods	66	66	66
Clip coupons almost always/pretty often	63	60	67
Buy fewer national brands	63	62	64
Buy less meat	63	62	63
Buy cheaper cuts of meat	61	60	62
Buy in quantity if cheaper	59	56	61
Stock up on items that may cost more later	50	52	49
Go to supermarket not usually shopped at for advertised specials	30	29	31
Put items back at end	14	15	13

How Women Economize in Meal Preparation and Eating

	Female Shoppers		
	Total	Working	Non-working
	%	%	%
Doing Now to Economize			
Do more with leftovers	78	75	80
Do more meal planning	70	65	74
Eat out less often	59	59	58
Do more baking/canning/freezing	56	51	59
Cut down on entertainment	50	53	48
Serve less at meals	30	32	29

Consumers Continue to Look for Ways of Saving Time While Shopping

Saving time while shopping continues to be important to many consumers. They say they are most likely to

go shopping at a particular time of day because it's less crowded then.

take what meat is available rather than asking for a different cut.

buy larger quantities.

Slightly fewer consumers this year than last year say they save time by going to a particular supermarket because it's less crowded. Most say they like to save time by shopping at a supermarket when it's less crowded, but comparatively few are willing to switch to a less crowded supermarket.

Trends in How People Save Time When Shopping

	Feb 1979	Feb 1980
	%	%
Things Done to Save Time		
Going at a particular time of day because it's less crowded	[a]	53
Taking what meat is available rather than asking for a different cut	39	42
Buying larger quantities	35	39
Skipping things on your shopping list because you were in a hurry	24	28
Going to a particular supermarket because it's less crowded	32	26
Going to a convenience store rather than a supermarket	24	26
Buying certain brands because they're more visible and easier to find	23	25
Walking out of the supermarket because it was too crowded	25	22
Buying packaged fruit and vegetables rather than bothering to get them weighed	23	20
Taking things out of your cart to get through the quick checkout line	9	9

[a]Not asked.

Key Groups Save Time When Shopping

Men and women use different methods to save time while shopping. In general, men tend to be more concerned about how crowded a supermarket is, while women say they look for ways to save time while they are shopping. Men are more likely than women to

- go to a convenience store rather than a supermarket
- go to a particular supermarket because it's less crowded.

Women are more likely than men to

- skip things on their shopping list because they are in a hurry
- buy larger quantities.

Working women continue to be more inclined to save time while shopping than nonworking women. Working women are more likely to

- take what meat is available rather than ask for a different cut
- skip thing on their shopping list because they are in a hurry
- go to a convenience store rather than a supermarket.

How People Save Time When Shopping

Things Done to Save Time	Total	Female Shoppers	Male Shoppers
	%	%	%
Going at a particular time of day because it's less crowded	53	53	55
Taking what meat is available rather than asking for a different cut	42	42	38
Buying larger quantities	39	40	33
Skipping things on your shopping list because you were in a hurry	28	29	21
Going to a particular supermarket because it's less crowded	26	24	33
Going to a convenience store rather than a supermarket	26	23	36
Buying certain brands because they're more visible and easier to find	25	24	29
Walking out of the supermarket because it was too crowded	22	21	27
Buying packaged fruit and vegetables rather than bothering to get them weighed	20	19	25
Taking things out of your cart to get through the quick checkout line	9	9	9

How Women Save Time When Shopping

	Female Shoppers		
	Total	Working	Non-working
	%	%	%
Things Done to Save Time			
Going at a particular time of day because it's less crowded then	51	52	53
Taking what meat is available rather than asking for a different cut	42	47	39
Buying larger quantities	40	39	42
Skipping things on your shopping list because you were in a hurry	29	34	26
Going to a particular supermarket because it's less crowded	24	26	22
Buying certain brands because they're more visible and easier to find	24	25	23
Going to a convenience store rather than a supermarket	23	27	20
Walking out of the supermarket because it was too crowded	21	21	21
Buying packaged fruit and vegetables rather than bothering to get them weighed	19	19	19
Taking things out of your cart to get through the quick checkout line	9	6	11

Section IV
Consumer Activism

Consumer activism again appears to be on the upswing. The *Supermarket Trends* consumer activist index shows 52 percent of the consumers to be either activists (eight percent) or potential activists (44 percent), based on their history of or willingness to participate in a variety of organized consumer activities. Activism appears to be most popular among men, working women, the middle aged, nonwhites and residents of the Northeast.

Consumers indicate approximately the same willingness to participate in consumer actions this year as they did in 1977 and much greater willingness than they showed in 1978. The most popular consumer activity continues to be refusing to buy products which cost too much. This year, however, more consumers say they have or are ready to boycott particular stores, distribute literature and leaflets, and march on a picket line.

Consumer Activism Is on the Upswing

After a period of relative quiescence, consumer activism now appears to be increasing. The *Trends* consumer activist index shows more than half the consumers (52 percent) to be either activists or potential activists comparable to the index readings obtained in 1974 and 1977, other years of high consumer volatility.

As in the past, men are more likely to be activists or potential activists than women, and working women are more prone to activism than nonworking women. Consumer activism among the middle aged, nonwhites and residents of the Northeast is higher than it was in 1977.

Consumer Activists[1]

	Nov 1974		Nov 1975		Apr 1977		Mar 1978		Feb 1980	
	%		%		%		%		%	
Activists[2]	13	47%	11	41%	10	50%	7	36%	8	52%
Potential activists[3]	34		30		40		29		44	
Nonactivists	53		59		50		64		48	

[1]Questions for consumer activist index not asked in February, 1979.
[2]Activists in this study are those who have already engaged in at least two forms of organized consumer action (joined or organized consumer boycotts against particular stores or products, got neighbors to sign petitions, marched on picket lines or distributed literature on boycotts).
[3]Potential activists in this study are those who are ready to engage in at least two forms of organized consumer action, or have already engaged in one organized consumer activity.

Profile of the Activists[1]

	Consumer Activists and Potential Activists		
	Apr 1977	Mar 1978	Feb 1980
	%	%	%
Total	**50**	**36**	**52**
Female shoppers	**50**	**34**	**51**
Working	55	35	60
Nonworking	47	33	45
Male shoppers	**52**	**45**	**58**
Age[2]			
Under 35 years	57	36	57
35-49 years	50	45	62
50 years and over	44	41	41
Region			
Northeast	49	48	58
North Central	58	42	56
South	46	22	50
West	51	37	45
Nonwhite	**47**	**47**	**56**

[1]Questions for consumer activists index not asked in February, 1979.
[2]Female shoppers only.

Consumers' Willingness to Take Action

In line with the consumer activism index readings, consumers this year are about as likely to undertake a variety of organized consumer actions as they were in 1977 and much more likely to act than they were in 1978.

The most popular consumer action continues to be refusing to buy products which cost too much, with 71 percent saying they have already done this and another 15 percent ready to do it. Consumers are more likely this year than they were in 1977 to:

- join organized consumer boycotts against particular stores
- distribute literature and leaflets to keep people from buying things
- march on a picket line.

Willingness To Take Action[1]

	Already Have Done It	Ready to Do It	Can Sympathize With but Wouldn't Do It	Think It's Wrong, Illegal or Ineffective
	%	%	%	%
Refusing to buy products which cost too much	71	15	9	4
Writing letters to your congressman demanding that the government do something	22	43	25	10
Getting neighbors to sign petitions	14	36	36	12
Joining organized consumer boycotts against particular products	12	24	49	14
Cashing in coupons on products not purchased	8	11	20	60
Joining organized consumer boycotts against particular stores	5	26	48	20
Marching in a picket line	5	21	51	22
Distributing literature and leaflets to keep people from buying things	3	28	47	21

[1]Unsures not shown.

Trends in Willingness To Take Action[1]

	Nov 1974	Nov 1975	Apr 1977	Mar 1978	Feb 1980
	%	%	%	%	%
Already Have/Ready to Do It					
Refusing to buy products which cost too much	89	85	82	74	86
Writing letters to your congressman demanding that the government do something	68	60	66	54	65
Getting neighbors to sign petitions	44	43	48	39	50
Joining organized consumer boycotts against particular products	38	26	38	24	36
Joining organized consumer boycotts against particular stores	24	22	26	20	31
Distributing literature and leaflets to keep people from buying things	28	21	26	21	31
Marching in a picket line	19	20	20	17	26
Cashing in coupons on products not purchased	16	11	18	7	19

[1]Question not asked in 1979.

Section V
Consumers Look at the Supermarket

In an era of high inflation and rising food prices, supermarkets appear to be maintaining their reputations among consumers. There is no evidence that attitudes toward supermarkets have either improved or worsened dramatically in the past year. Consumers continue to feel supermarkets make high profits, though profits are still seen as moderate compared to the oil companies or other businesses. The government, not supermarkets, continues to be blamed for high food prices.

Consumers continue to expect attractive environments, fresh products and money-saving specials from supermarkets. They give supermarkets their best ratings on precisely these areas. Value for the money appears to be the most important factor in deciding which supermarket they frequent, yet consumers cite it as the area in which supermarkets have worsened most over the past year. Consumers indicate that in determining a store's value for the dollar, they look for specials and price-off coupons, not advice on how to get the most for their money.

The idea of large, regional supermarkets elicits slightly more excitement this year than it did last year. Residents in the West are most likely to endorse the idea.

The Supermarket's Public Image Is Holding Steady

Despite the current high inflation and rising food prices, supermarkets appear to be holding steady in terms of consumer attitudes toward their profit levels. About two in three consumers (65 percent) continue to say supermarkets are making a lot of money, but half the consumers (50 percent) say their profit levels are nearly the same as they used to be. Fewer consumers this year feel supermarkets are making high profits.

Slightly fewer consumers, but still more than half (56 percent), now say supermarkets are benefiting as a result of high prices. When asked who is responsible for those high prices, almost half the consumers (43 percent) continue to blame the government, while only a minute fraction (two percent) hold supermarkets responsible.

Supermarket Profits

	Nov 1974	Nov 1975	Apr 1977	Mar 1978	Feb 1979	Feb 1980
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Supermarkets Are:						
Making a lot of money	63	60	59	73	63	65
Barely getting by	30	31	36	20	30	30
Not sure	7	9	5	7	7	5
Benefiting as a result of high prices	61	57	59	68	60	56
Being hurt by high prices	33	37	36	27	35	38
Not sure	6	6	5	5	5	6

Changes in Supermarket Profit Levels

	Mar 1978	Feb 1979	Feb 1980
	%	%	%
Higher than they used to be	53	45	42
About the same as they used to be	37	45	50
Less than they used to be	7	9	7
Not sure	3	1	1

Responsibility for High Food Prices[1]

(Volunteered)

	Feb 1979	Feb. 1980
	%	%
Government	39	42
Middlemen	18	13
The public	10	7
Unions	8	5
Food manufacturers	2	3
Wholesalers	**	3
Oil companies/OPEC	—	3
Supermarkets	3	2
Farmers	2	**
Other/everyone	18	21

**Less than 0.5 percent.

[1]Based on those who blamed someone (percent blaming no one was 39% in 1979 and 40% in 1980).

The Balance Between Profits and Public Responsibility

There is little change this year in consumers' perceptions of the balance food manufacturers and supermarket chains strike between profits and public responsibility. Supermarkets continue to be rated better than oil companies, business in general, food manufacturers and local electronic companies—and worse than banks, neighborhood groceries and farmers.

Because of rapidly increasing oil prices, the oil companies are rated worse this year than in the past. And farmers are now considered to strike as good a balance between profits and public responsibility as they did in 1974 and 1975. Only one in three (34 percent) now says they strike a bad balance, while almost half (47 percent) considered farmers too profit-oriented last year.

In general, women are more likely to say the food industry strikes a bad balance between profits and public responsibility than men are, particularly when it comes to supermarket chains.

Strikes a Bad Balance Between Profits and Public Responsibility[1]

	Nov 1974	Nov 1975	Apr 1977	Mar 1978	Feb 1979	Feb 1980
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Oil companies	87	89	87	89	89	94
Business in general	82	79	82	80	82	84
Local electric company	68	76	74	79	74	78
Food manufacturers	82	78	80	79	78	77
Supermarket chains	72	68	61	66	64	65
Banks	52	54	49	55	55	60
Neighborhood grocery	52	46	42	50	50	48
Farmers	33	33	37	42	47	34

[1]Repercentaged on the basis of those responding and excluding the "unsures."

Balance Between Profits and Public Responsibility in the Food Industry[1]

	Total	Female Shoppers	Male Shoppers
	%	%	%
Strikes a Bad Balance			
Food manufacturers	77	77	73
Supermarket chains	65	66	58
Neighborhood grocery	48	49	42
Farmers	34	35	29

[1]Repercentaged on the basis of those responding and excluding the "unsures."

Labor Unions Continue To Be Rated Poorly

Nearly three in four consumers (74 percent) continue to say that labor unions are doing a fair or poor job in living up to their public responsibility when it comes to wage demands. This reading is virtually unchanged from last year.

Public Responsibility of Labor Unions on Wage Demands

	Feb 1979	Feb 1980
	%	%
The Job Labor Unions Are Doing Living Up to Their Public Responsibility When It Comes to Wage Demands		
Excellent	3	2
Very good	17 } 20%	19 } 21%
Only fair	45	46
Not that good	30 } 75%	28 } 74%
Not sure	5	5

Consumers' Expectations From Supermarkets

Consumers have for the past two years held supermarkets chiefly responsible for

providing an attractive and pleasurable shopping environment

providing fresh products

providing money-saving specials.

Slightly fewer consumers this year than last year expect supermarkets to help with nutrition information and getting the best value for the money. They evidently expect supermarkets to provide money-saving specials and coupons, and then decide for themselves what constitutes good value.

Responsibilities of Supermarkets

	Mar 1978	Feb 1979	Feb 1980
	%	%	%
It Is the Job of Supermarkets to:			
Provide an attractive place to shop	96	97	97
Make shopping easier and more pleasurable	96	95	95
Make sure you don't buy old or stale products	92	95	95
Save your money with their specials	90	92	91
Help you pick the best value for the money	69	78	66
Help with *information* on how to save money and help feed family more nutritiously	*	63	60
Help you feed your family more nutritiously	41	48	41

*Not asked

Consumers' Evaluations of Supermarkets

Although supermarkets continue to be praised most for the quality of their shopping environments, consumers this year also rate supermarkets better on providing fresh products and helping them save money with specials. Consumers rate supermarkets best in those areas in which they feel they have the greatest responsibility.

Supermarket evaluations for helping with value and nutrition are unchanged from last year, when they were down slightly from their 1978 ratings. Supermarket performance in helping with information on how to save money and help feed the family more nutritiously continues to be below par.

Evaluation of Supermarket Performance[1]

	Mar 1978	Feb 1979	Feb 1980
	%	%	%
Supermarket That Respondent Usually Shops at Does a Good Job in:			
Providing an attractive place to shop	89	90	88
Making shopping easier and more pleasurable	83	79	82
Making sure you don't buy old or stale products	70	65	75
Saving your money with their specials	78	71	74
Helping you feed your family more nutritiously	76	72	71
Helping pick the best value for the money	70	65	64
Helping with *information* on how to save money and help feed family more nutritiously	*	47	47

*Not asked.
[1]Based on those who feel item is responsibility of supermarkets.

Value Is the All-Important Criterion

Even more than in the past, consumers this year say supermarkets are providing worse value for the money. Since value for the dollar is the characteristic consumers praise most in their *favorite* supermarket, this is obviously what consumers are most looking for in a supermarket. As previously stated, consumers expect money-saving specials and coupons from supermarkets, not help in deciding what constitutes good value.

Consumers also feel several other supermarket services have worsened in the past year. In particular, they give slightly lower ratings to the friendliness of employees, value of coupons, and quality of goods than they have in recent years. All three, it should be noted, are also mentioned by consumers as outstanding characteristics of their favorite supermarket.

Changes of Supermarket in Past Year

	Net Difference (Improved-Worse)		
	Mar 1978	Feb 1979	Feb 1980
	%	%	%
Variety of goods	+12	+21	+17
Weekly specials	+13	+16	+13
Friendliness of employees	+14	+15	+11
Value of coupons	+9	+9	+4
Checkout	+1	−1	—
Customer service	−4	−1	—
Quality of goods	−8	−7	−13
Value of the money	−49	−57	−62

Most Outstanding Characteristic of Favorite Supermarket

	Total
	%
Value for the dollar/low prices/specials	42
Quality of goods/wide selection	27
Convenient/close by	16
Friendly employees	10
Other	5

Larger, Regional Supermarkets Are Gaining in Popularity

Consumers, especially those in the West, are slightly more likely this year than last year to prefer larger regional supermarkets with a greater variety of goods somewhat further away from home to smaller supermarkets closer to home. Nearly half (47 percent) now endorse the larger regional supermarket idea.

Supermarket Preference

Type of Supermarket Preferred	Feb 1979	Feb 1980
	%	%
Smaller supermarkets closer to home	44	42
Larger regional supermarkets with a greater variety of goods somewhat further away from home	43	47
Not sure	13	11

Regional Supermarket Preference[1]

	Type of Supermarket Preferred	
	Smaller Supermarkets Closer to Home	Larger Regional Supermarkets With a Greater Variety of Goods Somewhat Further Away From Home
	%	%
Total	**42**	**47**
Northeast	44	46
North Central	44	47
South	42	46
West	35	50

[1] "Unsures" not shown.

Section VI
Supermarket Services

Two new supermarket services, computerized checkout systems and nonbrand merchandise, receive mixed reviews again this year. Although awareness of computerized checkout systems has increased, most notably in the South and West, almost half (46 percent) say they make no difference to the consumer.

As far as nonbrand (generic) foods are concerned, awareness here, too, is up, but interest has remained at its previous level.

Awareness of Computerized Checkout Systems Has Grown, and the Reactions Are Mixed

Substantially more shoppers than last year are now aware of computerized checkout systems. More than half (52 percent) have heard of them, though the number who shop at stores equipped with computerized checkout systems has not increased appreciably. Men and shoppers in the South and West are most likely to be aware of computerized checkout.

Almost half (46 percent) say computerized checkout systems make no difference, they neither benefit nor hurt the consumers. Of those who feel such systems do make a difference, support comes mainly from men, college graduates, the affluent, and residents of the Northeast and South; opposition comes from residents of the West and those with low incomes. Interestingly, computerized checkout systems this year get better ratings both in the South, where awareness is relatively high, and in the Northeast, where awareness is comparatively low. In the West, another area where awareness is high, the systems receive lower marks than they did last year.

Computerized Checkout Systems

	Feb 1979	Feb 1980
	%	%
Have heard of computerized checkout	42	52
Regular supermarket has computerized checkout	23	25

Awareness of Computerized Checkout Systems

	Total
	%
Total	52
Have Heard of Computerized Checkout Systems	
Male shoppers	61
Female shoppers	50
Region	
Northeast	49
North Central	44
South	57
West	60

Trends in Attitude Toward Computerized Checkout System

	Feb 1979	Feb 1980
	%	%
Computerized Checkout Systems:		
Benefit consumer	24	27
Hurt consumer	25	23
No difference	47	46
Not sure	4	4

Attitude Toward Computerized Checkout Systems

	Will Benefit Consumer	Will Hurt Consumer	Net Difference (Benefits-Hurts)
	%	%	%
Total	**27**	**23**	**+4**
Male shoppers	**34**	**22**	**+12**
Principal shoppers	32	24	+8
Female shoppers	**25**	**23**	**+2**
Working	27	27	=
Nonworking	24	20	+4
Education			
College graduate/ postgraduate	34	18	+16
Noncollege graduate	25	24	+1
Income			
Under $10,000	18	27	−9
$10,000-19,999	25	22	+3
$20,000 and over	33	21	+12
Region			
Northeast	36	22	+14
North Central	23	24	−1
South	27	18	+9
West	19	31	−12

Nonbrand Merchandise Appeals Chiefly to the Young

Awareness of nonbrand or generic merchandise is up slightly this year—to two out of three shoppers (66 percent)—though interest in them remains unchanged. It is most likely to be of interest to the young and least likely to appeal to elderly persons.

Nonbrand Merchandise

	Feb 1979	Feb 1980
	%	%
Have Heard of Supermarkets That Offer Cheaper Items Without Brand Identification		
Yes	61	66
No	36	32
Not sure	3	2
Interest in Nonbrand Items		
Very interested	24	24
Somewhat interested	29	28
Not too interested	47	48

Interest in Nonbrand Items

	Total
	%
Total	**52**
Very/Somewhat Interested	
Male shoppers	**55**
Principal shoppers	50
Female shoppers	**51**
Working	51
Nonworking	51
Age[1]	
Under 35 years	60
35-49 years	53
50 years and over	42

[1]Female shoppers only.

Section VII
Supermarket Shopping Patterns

Supermarket shopping patterns have not changed very much over the last several years. As in the past

- most shoppers go to the supermarket once a week or less
- Thursday, Friday and Saturday, the days after the food ads and coupons appear, remain the most popular shopping days; Sunday the least popular, though Sunday coupons may change this. For working women and men, Saturday is the most popular day, although half the men have no preference
- nonworking women continue to prefer to shop in the morning; working women and men, the evening.

Half the shoppers say they shopped at only one supermarket in the past week; most of the rest shopped at two supermarkets. Virtually all shoppers use their own cars as transportation to the supermarket.

The Frequency of Shopping Trips

The frequency with which shoppers go to the supermarket has not changed appreciably over the past several years. Most continue to go to the supermarket once a week or less. Nonworking women are likely to shop at supermarkets more often than working women; two years ago, working women were more likely to go to the supermarket more than once a week.

Trends in Frequency of Shopping Trips[1]

	Nov 1974	Nov 1975	Mar 1978	Feb 1979	Feb 1980
	%	%	%	%	%
Go to the supermarket once a week or less	52	52	55	56	54
Go to the supermarket more often than once a week	48	48	45	44	46

[1]Question not asked in April, 1977.

Frequency of Shopping Trips

		Female Shoppers			Male Shoppers	
	Total	Total	Working	Non-working	Total	Principal Shoppers
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Go to the supermarket once a week or less	54	55	61	51	50	48
Go to the supermarket more often than once a week	46	45	39	49	50	52

Frequency of Trips to the Supermarket Among Working and Nonworking Women

	Mar 1978	Feb 1979	Feb 1980
	%	%	%
Go to the Supermarket More Often Than Once a Week			
Working women	45	42	39
Nonworking women	41	43	49

The Number of Supermarkets in Which Consumers Shop

Half the consumers (50 percent) shopped at only one supermarket or less in the last week; most of the others shopped at two supermarkets. Working women are more likely to have shopped at only one supermarket in the last week.

Number of Different Supermarkets Shopped at in Last Week

		Female Shoppers			Male Shoppers	
	Total	Total	Working	Nonworking	Total	Principal Shoppers
	%	%	%	%	%	%
One or less	50	52	57	47	46	47
Two	35	35	33	36	36	33
Three or more	15	13	10	17	18	20

The Day of the Week People Go to the Supermarket

The preferred shopping day has not changed much over the last two years. Sunday remains the least popular day, and Thursday and Friday, after the food ads and coupons appear, the most popular.

As one would expect, working women are more likely to shop on Saturday. Perhaps because the stores are more crowded then, nonworking women tend to stay away on Saturday. Men, including those who are principal shoppers, show a higher-than-average propensity to shop on Sunday, but for them, too, the preferred shopping day is Saturday. Half the male sample indicate that they do not shop on any particular day of the week.

Trends in Day of Week People Go to Supermarket[1]

	Mar 1978	Feb 1979	Feb 1980
	%	%	%
Monday/Tuesday/Wednesday	22	25	22
Thursday	25	20	25
Friday	25	27	26
Saturday	25	25	24
Sunday	3	3	3
(No specal day)	(40)	(40)	(39)

[1]Based on those who shop on a particular day.

Day of Week People Go to Supermarket[1]

		Female Shoppers			Male Shoppers	
	Total	Total	Working	Nonworking	Total	Principal Shoppers
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Monday/Tuesday/Wednesday	22	23	20	25	23	29
Thursday	25	25	23	28	19	13
Friday	26	26	20	30	21	16
Saturday	24	24	34	15	26	31
Sunday	3	2	3	2	11	11
(No special day)	(39)	(36)	(32)	(39)	(50)	(54)

[1]Based on those who shop on a particular day.

The Time of Day People Go to the Supermarket

There is also no significant change this year in the time of day people go to the supermarket. Nonworking women are more likely to go shopping in the morning; working women and men, including principal shoppers, continue to prefer the evening.

Trends in Time of Day of Supermarket Shopping[1]

	Mar 1978	Feb 1979	Feb 1980
	%	%	%
Morning	32	32	34
Noon/afternoon	41	36	36
Evening	27	32	30
(No special time)	(6)	(5)	(5)

[1]Based on those giving a special shopping time.

Time of Day for Supermarket Shopping[1]

		Female Shoppers			Male Shoppers	
	Total	Total	Working	Nonworking	Total	Principal Shoppers
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Morning	34	37	27	45	22	24
Noon/afternoon	36	36	33	38	38	39
Evening	30	27	40	17	40	37
(No special time)	(5)	(5)	(3)	(7)	(3)	(4)

[1]Based on those giving a special shopping time.

The Car Is the Principal Means of Transportation to the Supermarket

The overwhelming majority of shoppers use their own cars to get to the supermarket. This is true for both men and women, although male principal shoppers and shoppers in the Northeast are more likely than others to say they walk to the supermarket.

Usual Means of Transportation to the Supermarket

		Female Shoppers			Male Shoppers	
	Total	Total	Working	Nonworking	Total	Principal Shoppers
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Own car	82	81	88	76	84	79
Walk	10	10	6	13	12	18
Friend's or relative's car	6	7	4	9	3	1
Bus	1	1	1	2	1	1
Other	1	1	1	**	**	1

**Less than 0.5%.

Regional Differences in Means of Transportation to the Supermarket

	Total	Northeast	North Central	South	West
	%	%	%	%	%
Own car	82	66	89	85	85
Walk	10	24	5	6	8
Friend's or relative's car	6	5	5	8	5
Bus	1	3	—	1	2
Other	1	2	1	—	—

Section VIII
The Fast Food Phenomenon

Fast food consumption has remained fairly stable over the past few years. However, consumers who do frequent fast food restaurants appear to be doing so somewhat more frequently. Despite this fact, many consumers say they are eating at fast food restaurants less than they did a year or two ago. This perceived decline in fast food consumption may forecast a real decline for the fast food business in the next few years.

Fast food restaurant patrons feel fast food is as economical as eating at home. Two in three (64 percent) say its prices are increasing at the same rate as those of supermarket goods. They are also likely to view fast food as a social event. Most (84 percent) of those who went to a fast food restaurant in the past two weeks did so with their family or friends.

People Are Eating in Fast Food Restaurants More Frequently, but They Think They're Going to Them Less Frequently

Patronage of fast food restaurants is up slightly this year; nearly half the consumers (46 percent) have eaten at a fast food restaurant in the last two weeks. Of them, more than half went to fast food restaurants two or more times in that two-week span.

However, only 18 percent of the fast food restaurant patrons say they are eating in fast food restaurants more frequently than they did a year or two ago. Forty-two percent say they are eating at them less frequently. Consumers' perception of declining fast food restaurant patronage may be a harbinger of real declines in the fast food business in the next few years.

The Fast Food Habit

	Mar 1978	Feb 1979	Feb 1980
	%	%	%
Ate in a fast food restaurant in the past two weeks or so	**45**	**41**	**46**
Once	27	26	21
Twice	9	8	12
Three or more times	9	7	13

Frequency of Fast Food Dining[1]

	Total
	%
Frequency Compared to a Year or Two Ago	
More	18
Less	42
About as frequently	40

[1]Base = Ate in a fast food restaurant in past two weeks.

Fast Food Is Considered To Be About as Economical as Eating at Home

Almost two in three (64 percent) fast food restaurant patrons say fast food is increasing in price at the same rate as supermarket items.

Fast Food—The Economic Dimension[1]

	Total
	%
Rate of Increase of Fast Food Prices Compared to Supermarket Prices	
Faster	20
Slower	14
Same Rate	64
Not sure	2

[1]Base = Ate in a fast food restaurant in past two weeks.

Fast Food Continues To Be a Social Event

Most (84 percent) of those who ate in a fast food restaurant in the last two weeks say they went with their family or friends. Of those, the number who say they went with their family is up slightly this year; the number with friends down slightly.

Fast Food—The Social Dimension[1]

	Mar 1978	Feb 1979	Feb 1980
	%	%	%
Went to a Fast Food Restaurant Last Time:			
With family	59	53	59
With friends	23	31	25
Alone	16	16	15
Not sure	2	—	1

[1]Base = Ate in a fast food restaurant in past two weeks.